

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03 ACDA-07 MCT-01 AID-05 /086 W
-----081012Z 069504 /17

R 071649Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3250
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0972

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PIERRE GEMAYEL: SOUTH LEBANON

1. PAID COURTESY CALL MARCH 4 ON PHALANGE LEADER
PIERRE GEMAYEL AT TRADITIONAL PHALANGE HEADQUARTERS
NEAR PORT (BUILDING, WHICH HEAVILY DAMAGED IN FIGHTING,
NOW UNDER RECONSTRUCTION BUT SEVERAL ROOMS
HABITABLE). MOST OF HOUR WE SPENT TOGETHER WAS
TAKEN UP BY GEMAYEL'S HARANGUING ME ON INCOMPREHENSIBLE
AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEBANESE FIGHT FOR
SURVIVAL. INSTEAD OF HELPING OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDS,
INDEED, THE ONLY FRIENDS WE HAD HAD WHEN THE GOING
WAS ROUGH, WE HAD STOOD BY WITH ARMS FOLDED. HAD
IT NOT BEEN FOR PHALANGE, COMMUNIST SUBVERSIVES
WOULD HAVE TAKEN OVER COUNTRY, AND OUR COMMON
PRINCIPLES WOULD HAVE LOST THEIR ONLY HOME IN THE
NEAR EAST. IT WAS NOW UP TO AMERICANS TO RESTORE
SECURITY. IT WAS LEAST WE COULD DO.

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2. HE REPEATED MESSAGE A NUMBER OF TIMES TO BE
SURE I GOT IT. I FINALLY MANAGED TO ASK EXACTLY
WHAT HE WANTED US TO DO NOW. HE SAID AMERICANS
KNEW BETTER THAN HE WHAT TO DO. HE COULD NOT
IMAGINE THAT A PEOPLE WHO COULD PUT A MAN ON THE
MOON WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO TO SAVE A COUNTRY
AS SMALL AS LEBANON.

3. I ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE A CEASE-FIRE IN THE SOUTH. HE SAID THAT IF IT WERE A QUESTION OF DEALING WITH ARAFAT, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, BUT IN THE SOUTH WE WERE DEALING WITH EXTREMISTS, WHO WERE BENT ON DESTROYING THE ESTABLISHED ORDER. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH THEM. (NOTE: GEMAYEL MET WITH ARAFAT AT KUWAITI AMBASSADOR'S HOME LATE IN FEBRUARY.)

4. COMMENT: AM TOLD ONE HAS TO HAVE AT LEAST TWO HARANGUES FROM GEMAYEL BEFORE HE STARTS TALKING TURKEY. ALTHOUGH HE SOUNDS FANATICAL, NOT TO SAY PARANOIAC, ON SUBJECT OF COMMUNIST PLOT AGAINST LEBANON, HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON LEBANESE POLITICAL RECONCILIATION TEND TO BE MORE MODERATE THAN THOSE OF OTHER CHRISTIAN FRONT LEADERS, AND EVEN HIS SON BASHIR. HE IS THE ONE CHRISTIAN LEADER THE MUSLIMS OF BEIRUT LIKE FORMER PRIME MINISTERS SAEB SALAM AND TAKIEDDIENE SOLH FEEL THEY CAN TALK TO. HE IS FAR FROM BEING THE BRAINS OF THE LEBANESE FRONT, BUT HE AND HIS MOVEMENT ARE ITS STRONG RIGHT ARM, AND HE REMAINS A KEY FIGURE ON THE LEBANESE POLITICAL SCENE.
PARKER

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